

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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USIA-12 IO-13 DPW-01 RSR-01 /120 W

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R 180505Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4746

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDEL JEC PARIS

/DAO SAIGON

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL DNAANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12931

RE.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR FS

SUBJECT: ICCS: CANDEL DEBRIEFING OR RELEASED CANADIANS

REF: SAIGON 12814

1. SUMMARY. AT DAO JULY 17 BRIEFING, CANDEL REP PROVIDED ADDITIONAL DETAILS TO STROY OF CAPTURE, CAPTIVITY, AND RELEASE OF TWO CANDEL OFFICERS WHICH WAS COVERED IN JULY 16 CANDEL PRESS CONFERENCE AND REPORTED REFTEL. CANDEL BELIEVES PRG FORCES HAD ORDERS TO SEIZE ANY ICCS PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY CANADIANS, MOVING THEIR AREA BASED ON PRG SUSPICIONS THAT SAIGON AGENTS WERE MASQUERADING AS ICCS PERSONNEL AND PRG UNDERSTANDING THAT ANY ICCS GROUP TRAVELLING WITHOUT TPJMC LIAISON OFFICERS AND FULL CHIP REPRESENTATION WAS A SHAM.

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END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE CANDEL DEBRIEFING OF RELEASED CANADIAN OFFICERS, CANDEL REP GAVE DAO FULLER ACCOUNT OF THE MEN'S 18 DAY ODYSSEY IN HOSTILE HANDS. WHILE PRG FORCES WHO INITIALLY CAPTURED THE MEN WERE APPARENTLY UNSURE WHAT TO DO WITH THEM, CANDEL BELIEVES PRG HAD ORDERS TO SEIZE ANY ICCS PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY CANADIANS, MOVING IN THEIR AREA. ACCORDING TO CANDEL, PRG SUSPECT THAT SAIGON AGENTS ARE MASQUERADING AS ICCS PERSONNEL. FURTHERMORE, PRG FEELS THAT ANY ICCS GROUP TRAVELLING WITHOUT LIAISON OFFICERS OF FULL CHIP REPRESENTATION IS A SHAM.

3. CANDEL THINKS MEN WERE HELD FIRST BY LOCAL PRG FORCES BUT NVA PERSONNEL TOOK OVER ON JULY 4 AFTER WHICH THEIR TREATMENT WORSENERD AND INDOCTRINATION/INTERROGATION SESSIONS BEGAN IN ALTERNATING PATTERN OF THREATS AND CAJOLERY. RELEASED CANADIANS WERE IMPRESSED BY FACT THAT THEIR CAPTORS JL KNEW CHAPTER AND VERSE OF PARIS AGREEMENT, PROTOCOLS AND COMMUNIQUE, HAD ALL COPIES OF CEASE-FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORTS COMPLETED BY XUAN LOC ICCS TEAM AND THAT MANY OF THEIR CAPTORS SPOKE ENGLISH. WHILE RELEASED MEN HAVE BEEN DECLARED MEDICALLY FIT, THEY LIVED ON STRAIGHT DIET OF RICE AND BAMBOO SHOOTS DURING CAPTIVITY. CAPT PATTEN LOST FORTY POUNDS AND RECEIVED TWO BEATINGS RESULTING FROM HIS ATTEMPTS TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS COLLEAGUE AND TWO ICCS VIETNAMESE CO-CAPTIVES.

4. ALSO DURING THEIR CAPTIVITY, CANDEL REP REPORTED THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY WERE HELD WERE SUBJECTED TO INDIRECT ARTILLERY FIRE, PRESUMABLY COMING FROM ARVN, SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF SMALL ARMS FIRE AND CAPTIVES SAW ONE TACAIR STRIKE. CANADIANS REFUSED TO SIGN ANY DOCUMENTS BUT, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM CAPT PATTEN, THE TWO ICCS VIETNAMESE SIGNED EVERYTHING. TWO VIETNAMESE RECEIVED CONSIDERABLY ROUGHER TREATMENT NONETHELESS. ICCS JEEP HAS NOT YET BEEN RETURNED.

5. COMMENT. THE RELEASED MEN THINK THAT BY JULY 3 THEIR IDENTITY AS BONA-FIDE ICCS PERSONNEL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO SATISFACTION OF THEIR CAPTORS AND THAT THEIR FREEDOM WAS IMMINENT. IT WOULD APPEAR INSTEAD THAT NVA TOOK OVER THE OPERATION AND TACTICS CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY. WE ALSO NOTE THAT VC HAS GOOD CONTACTS IN ICCS XUAN LOC TEAM OR ELSEWHERE SINCE MOST OF THE ICCS INVESTIGATION REPORTS IN POSSESSION OF THEIR CAPTORS HAVE NOT YET BEEN SUBMITTED

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TO TPJMC. FURTHERMORE, NVA/PRG ARE APPARENTLY PREPARED TO ENFORCE THEIR INTERPRETATION OF AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOLS TO WHATEVER TERRITORY THEY FEEL THEY CONTROL.

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